John Reitz earns MMR 316

What got John started in the model railroading hobby? Maybe having both of his grandfathers working for the Pennsylvania Railroad inspired him. Alternatively, it could have been that old Lionel train set he played with when he was about six years old.

There is still a debate in the family as to who really owned that first train set. The story is, it belonged to his father, but his sister said it was hers, and she "let him play with it." John always thought it was his. Anyway he always had fun playing with it—setting it up around the Christmas tree. That's when he found out you can get really neat sparks when you laid the 'real' tinsel type stuff across the rails. "Kids, don't try this at home." He only did that a couple of times before he was 'learned' not to do it anymore.

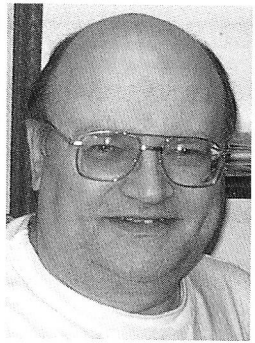
Maybe that's why his mother brought a 4' x 8' sheet of plywood for him to set the track on. A few years later he received an HO train set as a birthday gift. He remembers it was a black and orange Athearn engine and had the rubber bands that powered the trucks. It was about 17 years later that a friend at work got him back into the hobby. About that same time John joined the NMRA and became a 'Life Member."

In reading a November *Bulletin* one year, he noticed an ad about an open house that was right in his hometown. When he visited the layout and talked with the owner, he found out that he belonged to a local 'round robin' group that got together once a month to share ideas and work on each other's layouts.

Today, he still belongs to that group and has met a lot of new model railroaders and has expanded his talents even more. When he learned the NMRA Pike Registrar position was open he volunteered for the job. After a few years he had enough points for the 'volunteer' certificate. That was the first one he earned.

"I think that was what started me on the path to pursue the Master Model Railroader certificate," he said.

At the 1992 NMRA convention John met a fellow NCR member named Jim Williams. Jim asked if he would like to become the superintendent of Division three. John agreed, and with the encouragement and inspiration from his family and fellow NMRA members, he was able to earn the MMR certificate.



The journey to MMR was both challenging and fulfilling. It offered John a way to learn more about this great hobby of model railroading, and about the prototype railroads that many of us look to for ideas for our own little corner of the world.

John holds AP Certificates in Cars, Scenery, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Chief Dispatcher, Association Official and Association Volunteer.